

JUNE 2, 2003

-) ORDER INCREASING
-) MONTHLY ACCESS FEE

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) for consideration of a recommendation which would increase the monthly access charge for support of dual party relay from \$.11 per month to \$.15 per month.

S.C. Code Ann. Section 58-9-2530(A) (Supp. 2001) states that the Commission may require all local exchange telephone companies operating in this State to impose a monthly charge not to exceed twenty-five (25) cents on all residential and business local exchange access facilities as necessary to fund the operation of the dual party relay system in South Carolina. The statute goes on to state that the amount of the charge must be determined by the Commission based upon the amount of funding necessary to accomplish the purposes of the article and provide dual party telephone relay services on a continuous basis. The monthly access charge was originally determined by us to be \$.10, and the charge was at this level until our issuance of Order No. 2000-0175 in this Docket, dated February 22, 2000, which reduced the amount to \$.07. Order No. 2000-992, dated December 11, 2000 further reduced the amount to \$.05. Order No. 2002-522, dated July 12, 2002 increased the amount to \$.07. Order No. 2003-4, dated January 2, 2003 increased the amount to \$.11.

The \$.10 charge had historically resulted in a surplusage in the fund established for the operation of the system. This resulted in the recommendation from the House Transportation, Law Enforcement and Regulatory Subcommittee that we consider reducing the monthly charge to \$.07. We ordered this reduction, but the \$.07 level still produced a surplusage, resulting in a further reduction to \$.05. We then found that the \$.05 would ultimately produce a deficit, so our July 2002 Order increased the amount to \$.07. Subsequently, further deficits were projected utilizing \$.07, so our January 2003 Order increased the amount to \$.11. Staff projections, however, reveal that the program will be in the red by this time next year if the current \$.11 level is maintained.

We have therefore examined, with the aid of the Executive Director, projects approved for funding in the near future. After due deliberation, we believe that, at this time, the monthly access charge should be increased from \$.11 to \$.15. We hold that this amount will accomplish the purpose of the article and provide dual party telephone relay services on a continuous basis. We note that, if necessary, we can reexamine this increase at a later date using these statutory criteria.


Accordingly, we hereby order all Local Exchange Carriers, including incumbent carriers and competitive carriers, to increase the monthly access fee billed to each access line for the support of the dual party relay system from \$.11 to \$.15 per month as soon as it is technically feasible. We instruct the Commission's Executive Director to monitor this account, so that this Commission can decide whether additional adjustments should be made in the future.

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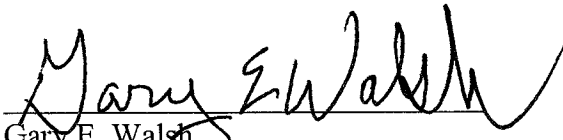
This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:



Mignon L. Clyburn
Chairman

ATTEST:



Gary E. Walsh
Executive Director

(SEAL)